

## House Republican Press Release

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### **Rep. Farr: Require Applicants for CT ID Cards to be Fingerprinted to Fight Identity Theft**



Fraudulent use of state-issued identity cards has become a major problem in Connecticut and enactment of legislation to require applicants for the cards to be fingerprinted would significantly reduce the incidence of identity theft in Connecticut, state Representative Bob Farr, R-19<sup>th</sup> District, said today.

The measure (House Bill 5466) was aired at a public hearing conducted by the General Assembly's Judiciary Committee today.

"Identity theft is becoming a major problem in Connecticut and one of the main factors contributing to a spike in this kind of criminal activity is the widespread fraudulent use of state issued ID cards," said Representative Farr, the House Ranking Member (Republican leader) on the Judiciary Committee and a cosponsor of the legislation. "Requiring applicants for state-issued ID cards to be fingerprinted would make criminals think twice about procuring them for use in identity theft crimes."

The state Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV), which processes applications for identity cards and issues them to persons who don't have drivers licenses but need an official state ID card, recently conducted a review of about 100,000 drivers' license and identity cards and found 600 individuals who possess the cards under multiple names. The DMV also found one individual who had 24 state identity cards issued to him under different names, Representative Farr said.

"More than a decade ago, the state Department of Social Service began requiring clients to obtain official DSS identification cards, which included a fingerprint requirement, to qualify for welfare benefits," Representative Farr said. "Almost immediately after the requirement was established, individuals who had been involved in identity theft crimes began using DMV ID cards because fingerprinting was not required. After DSS began requiring its clients to obtain ID cards that included fingerprints, the incidence of welfare fraud declined significantly."

"Extrapolating from the results of the DMV review, there could be as many as 20,000 people who are in possession of fraudulent official Connecticut ID cards, which facilitate identity theft and other criminal activities," Representative Farr said. "Requiring ID card applicants to be fingerprinted would be a very effective deterrent because most individuals involved in identity theft crimes have prior convictions. Even if they bring in false documents such as forged birth certificates to obtain ID cards, police would be able

to trace them using the fingerprints obtained by DMV if they use the cards in the commission of a crime.”